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CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHOUT CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP: THE FOLLY OF A SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

The paper is based on a self evaluation of perceived supervisory capabilities of 21 primary school heads attending a UNICEF workshop on the supervision of teachers in training. In their self evaluation, the heads of schools express lack of confidence and expertise in providing in-school instructional leadership in more than half the subjects comprising the primary school curriculum. The paper distinguishes administrative leadership from curriculum and instructional leadership and concludes by highlighting the role and significance of the school head as a curriculum and instructional leader. It is argued that the extent and quality of implementation of any curriculum is heavily dependent upon the amount and quality of training and leadership afforded assistant teachers in curriculum and instruction.

Introduction

The aftermath of the Lewis–Taylor (1974) report on African education has been marked by unprecedented curriculum activity with the formation in Zimbabwe of the Curriculum Development Unit shortly after independence. A whole plethora of new content subject areas have come into the educational scene, particularly in primary education. The expansion and diversity of curriculum offerings at this level has meant that the teacher training colleges have themselves been overwhelmed by change in curricula emphases and orientation at school level and hence in their ability to appropriately train teachers competent to handle new curricula effectively.

Innovation of the new curricula, having occurred in a relatively short time span, has literally made a lot of the certified teachers considerably in-experienced and doubtlessly ineffective. Of the 29 748 trained and certified primary teachers 45% are teachers awaiting training (Sibanda, 1991). Considering that approximately 30% of primary teachers are post-independence trained, 70% of those in post would not have received formal college training in the new curricula. Even those in training may not be articulate and effective in the new curricula given the reported lack of vertical articulation between college and school curricula (Shumba, in press).

Furthermore, the logistics and funding to re-train or in-service all 58 000 primary teachers in a college setting in the eleven primary curricula areas would be astronomical and formidable. Even if this were possible, college vacancies would have to be found since those few places currently available are over subscribed by teachers on initial training. Teacher shortage at current levels also implies that teachers are most needed in schools most of the year. All these factors militate against the provision of college based in-service training (INSET) or any formal training for lengthy periods and hence school based INSET offers an attractive alternative.

Researchers in developed countries such as Hopkins and Wideen (1984) have found, in their observation of school operations and in their survey of teachers, that the school head or principal serves as the leader when it comes to school based development and school improvement effort. Another finding true to Zimbabwe, is that school heads are generally exposed more to new ideas and knowledge utilization than are assistant teachers (Hopkins and Wideen, 1984; Fullan, 1984). They also observe that INSET programs for school heads are becoming more widespread and that in the school operation, the school head is the initiator and facilitator of major changes within the school. Many voices in Zimbabwe have expressed concern and need for school improvement (Makawa, 1991; Shumba, 1991a, Nyagura and Reece, 1989) which according to Hopkins and Wideen (1984) encompasses:

> ...topics such as in–service, the professional development of teachers, the implementation of educational innovation, school focused curriculum development, organization development, and the roles of administrators, teachers and students in knowledge utilization (p. 1).

Although no claims can be made that school heads in Zimbabwe provide leadership in all these areas, they are expected to perform many of these functions (Ministry of Education Standards Control Unit, 1987). However, only forty five percent and twenty percent of these duties and functions of school heads have been analyzed and classified by Nyagura and Reece (1989) as being either curriculum– oriented or instructional in nature respectively. On the other hand, taking into account the fact that some of the functions overlap and can fall into several categories, eighty percent are classified as administrative functions (Nyagura and Reece, 1989). Given the centrality of the school head in curriculum and instructional implementation, it is rather ironic that in other countries (Fullan, 1984), and in Zimbabwe (Nyagura and Reece, 1989) school heads do not formally receive pre–service or in–service training for this role and hence they are unprepared to serve effectively in this role. It becomes essential to find out the concerns of school heads in order to establish what could constitute useful and effective INSET. Hall and Hord (1987) make a pertinent observation on the provision of INSET for teachers:

> Historically, teachers have all too often been provided with workshops, materials and other resources based on the needs of others rather than an understanding of teachers' needs (p. 5).

The Study

This observation highlights the need to base staff development and training (SDT) efforts on the needs and concerns of the recipients of such training. The study was concerned with identifying the concerns and INSET needs of primary school heads (PSHs) particularly with reference to curricula implementation, the instructional supervisory role, and

provision of school based SDT in instruction– related areas central to school improvement. As Fullan's (1984) extensive review on knowledge utilization demonstrates, at primary level in particular, the school head's understanding and interest in instruction is of critical importance to the quality of classroom implementation and to the levels of achievement of pupils.

Specifically, the study sought to seek information on the following:

(1) academic and professional qualifications of primary school heads (PSHs);

(2) determine the experience of PSHs as leaders in schools;

(3) determine the teaching load of PSHs;

(4) finding out the aspects of instructional supervision PSHs are confident or not confident in;

(5) finding out areas in which PSHs and teachers would need and benefit from staff development and training;

(6) finding out curriculum and instructional areas PSHs can provide staff development and training to teachers;

(7) finding out the staff development and training activities conducted within the school;

(8) finding out the main activities and purpose of staff meetings in schools;

(9) finding out the perception of PSHs on the constraints and problems in the running of schools; and

(10) finding out the perception of PSHs on the role of the school in the training of primary teachers.

Sample and Methodology

The sample consisted of 34 primary school heads attending a November 1991 UNICEF sponsored workshop on the supervision of teachers on initial training at Seke Teachers' College. Utilizing background information and findings of the Nyagura and Reece (1989) study of secondary school heads an open response questionnaire was developed. The thirty four workshop participants were drawn from four administrative regions namely Harare, Mashonaland Central, East, and West. The PSHs had been identified by their regional offices as those likely to accept trainee teachers from the two Harare primary training colleges and as those who needed orientation to the expectations of the colleges pertaining to their trainees. The open response questionnaire was distributed to the heads on day one of the workshop to be completed and returned on the next.

At the close of the workshop, twenty one (21) completed questionnaires were received representing 61.8% of the 34 originally issued. Some PSHs had left prior to the closure of the workshop, but the number could not be ascertained. A follow up on the missing cases could not be made as the questionnaire had not been pre–coded and respondents had been asked not to write their names to assure confidentiality. The 21 respondents thus comprised the sample and provide the data being analyzed.

A precautionary note needs to be sounded on interpreting the results. Firstly, the analysis is based on a small sample of PSHs who are not representative of the population in the four regions and nationally. Harare region alone has 218 primary schools (Sibanda, 1991) and hence the sample only represents about 10% of PSHs in that region alone assuming each school has a head. Harare and the three Mashonaland regions have among them 14 000 primary schools. Studies of school heads or principals and leadership behavior have been beset with problems of sample size ranging from a case study (or survey) of one principal to several hundreds

(Fullan, 1984). Secondly, the analysis is based upon an open response self assessment which can be highly impressionistic and subjective both to respondents and to the interpreter of such data. The perception of non–respondents could not be ascertained and hence the categorization of responses may not reflect the entire range of perceptions.

Findings and Discussion

Qualifications, Experience, and Teaching responsibility of PSHs

The majority of the twenty one PSHs (66.7%) reported their highest academic qualifications as five passes in O Level subjects. Six (6) PSHs reported that they had at least one Advanced level subject and only one had a junior certificate as the highest academic qualification.

All the heads of schools were certificated primary school teachers and a majority (66.7%) had either a T3 primary teachers certificate (28.6%) or a certificate in education (CE) (38.1%). Eight (19%) had either a primary lower (PTL) or higher (PTH) teachers' certificate. Three did not state their qualifications although they submitted to being trained and certificated. Of the eight having the CE, four had obtained it following college based INSET having originally been PTH trained. From this analysis, the majority of primary school heads had academic and professional qualifications that were regulated by the Ministry of Education for appointment to the post of substantive head or deputy.

Table 1 gives a breakdown of the number of years the respondents had served in the post of head of school. The majority (71.4%) had between 3–10 years experience as PSH. Fifty seven percent had served between one and five years and only one respondent had served as a head of school for more than ten years and hence nearly all twenty one had been appointed to the post after independence. It can be inferred that the PSHs in the sample were relatively inexperienced, perhaps reflecting an additional consideration regional offices could have used to select workshop participants.

Table 1: Reported Number of Years as Primary School Head (N = 21).

Years as School Head	Frequency n	%
1 – 2 years	5	23.8
3 – 5 years	7	33.3
6 – 10 years	8	38.1
Over 10 years	1	4.8
Totals	21	100.0

The teaching responsibility of school heads in terms of number of class sessions or periods are aggregated in Table 2. It must be observed that the width of the categories is not uniform being based on open responses. Further, none of the respondents indicated a teaching load between the 10–15 and the 30–50 categories. The majority (61.9%) taught the full range of subjects in the primary curriculum and this approximates to between 40 and 50 periods per week. The teaching load reduces to as low as 30 periods a week in cases where double sessioning or 'hot seating' is practiced. One PSH explained this by revealing that some class periods for areas such as Environmental and Agricultural Science, Physical Education, and other newer subjects are unofficially removed from the curriculum or are taught for fewer and shorter periods so that two class sessions can be accommodated in a single school day. Only a negligible number (9.5%) were non–teaching school heads. The sample of PSHs consisted, to a very large extent, of school heads who had heavy teaching responsibilities in addition to their expected school leadership role. The majority taught at least 30 periods a week. Such heavy teaching responsibility is burdensome and reduces and interferes with the time available to the school head for curriculum and instructional supervisory functions (Nyagura and Reece, 1989; Hopkins and Wideen, 1984).

Table 2: Number of Periods PSHs Taught per Week (N = 21).

Periods Taught Per Week	Frequency	
	n	%
30 –50	13	61.9
10 – 15	2	9.5
3 – 9	4	19.1
Nil	2	9.5
Totals	21	100.0

Aspects of instructional supervision PSHs were confident

Pertaining to the supervision of instruction (teaching and learning), the PSHs were asked to state the functions they were most confident in. The results of analyzing their responses appear in Table 3. All respondents (100%) identified aspects fitting into the category of 'assessing lesson success' as those they were most confident in. Under this category were included aspects such as judging and assessing the attainment of objectives, imparting subject matter, pupils activities and participation, and pacing and sequencing of lessons. The responses here could reflect the PSHs' failure to distinguish between assessment and supervision as they tended to give replies fitting 'assessment'. A significant majority (85.7%) also expressed confidence in supervising lesson planning and preparation, and drawing schemes of work which would preclude ability in syllabus interpretation and an understanding of content structure and organization in which 66.7% expressed confidence. Appropriate and effective feedback to the supervisee is questionable given that heads of schools have not received formal training in the supervisory function (Nyagura and Reece, 1989), and in light of the areas PSHs were least confident in (Table 4).

A minority of respondents identified marking of pupils work (38.1%), class and discipline management (rapport and interaction) (38.1%), and general record keeping particularly remedial records (28.5%) as areas in which they had confidence. Due to the open response structure of the questionnaire, some respondents failed to identify aspects which did not cross their minds on completing it, and hence it is difficult to infer whether the small number of respondents imply lack of confidence by the majority. Notable however, is the fact that the areas identified by the least number of respondents are the same areas in which primary teachers have been reported to be in–effective (Chivore, 1990).

Table 3: Areas of teaching supervision PSHs are confident (N = 21).

Aspects of Teaching Supervision	Frequency	
	n	%
Assessing lesson success (attainment of objectives/ imparting subject matter/ pupils activities and participation/ pacing and sequencing of lesson)	21	100.0
Lesson plans and lesson preparation	18	85.7
Schemes of work (syllabus interpretation/ content organization)	14	66.7
Marking/scrutiny of pupils work	8	38.1
Classroom management (class displays /rapport/ class interaction/ questioning/sitting arrangements)	8	38.1
Class record keeping	6	28.6
Involving more teachers in supervision	2	9.5

In Chivore's (1990) study, primary teachers were not effective in areas which included: remedial work and remedial record keeping, evaluation of lessons and schemes, and maximizing pupil participation and

interaction in lessons. The fact the PSHs did not make explicit their confidence in these areas leads to the conjecture that the majority may not be confident and/or effective in providing leadership in these areas. The conjecture gets a little merit from Nyagura and Reece's survey of 78 secondary school heads in which the heads identified these areas as those that would be of value for staff development and training of their teachers and for which they were not themselves able to provide school based INSET. Further justification for the conjecture is obtained from the analysis of the PSHs self report of areas they were least confident in (Table 4).

Aspects of instructional supervision PSHs are least confident in

Table 4 shows that a significant majority (61.9%) of the PSHs were least confident in supervising teaching and lesson development in more than half the subjects comprising the primary school curriculum. The following were seven subjects heads were least confident in reported as percent of those identifying this aspect: Music (69.2%), Physical Education (PE) (61.5%), Art and Craft (A/C) (53.8%), Religious and Moral Education (RME) (38.5%), Environmental and Agricultural Science (EAS) (38.5%), Home Economics (HE) and Social Studies (SS) (38.1%). In general, PSHs were least confident in providing instructional leadership in the "expressive arts", practical subjects with a science inclination, and those like SS which draw content from multiple disciplines.

Supervision entails giving feedback and suggestions for improvement to the supervisee (Harris, 1985); and indeed feedback is an essential aspect in effective and useful supervision (Makawa, 1991). This sought of assistance can only be conjectured to be ineffective in these subject areas in which PSHs are least confident. Moreover, given that school heads get more exposure to INSET (Hopkins and Wideen, 1984), it can only be speculated that assistant teachers qualifying as teachers in the same period as the heads could predictably be less confident. Lack of leadership and confidence in such areas of study has resulted in relegation of some of the subjects to be taught late in the school day and for fewer periods per week (Lewin and Bajah, 1991).

Other aspects school heads report as having least confidence are: drawing schemes from the syllabus as opposed to the text (52.4%), remedial work (28.6%), staff development and making suggestions for improvement (28.6%). Surprising is the fact that the number of PSHs reporting confidence in providing leadership in scheming and syllabus interpretation was a significant majority of 66.7% in Table 3 as compared to 52.4% reporting 'least confident' in Table 4 a percent difference which may not be significant. In one respect this serves to highlight the low validity of self reports and on the other the need to provide school heads and assistant teachers with formal training in the curriculum and instructional domains (Nyagura and Reece, 1989; Shumba, in press).

Table 4: Aspects of teaching supervision PSHs are least confident (N = 21).

Aspects of Teaching Supervision	Frequency	
	n	%
Teaching or lesson development in specific subject areas (Music 8 PE 8 Art 7 RME 5 HE 4 EAS 5 SS 4)**	13	61.9
Syllabus interpretation/ formulating objectives/ scheming based on the syllabus	11	52.4
Remedial Work	6	28 6
Staff development/ feedback/ makingsuggestions for improvement	6	28.6
Assessing personality/teacher welfare	5	23.8

Note: **Number following each subject indicates the number of PSHs identifying it as the subject they were least confident.

Taking together PSHs reporting 'least confidence' in remedial work (28.6%) and 'making suggestions for improvement', we find that a majority (57.2%) are unable to remedy work diagnosed as unsatisfactory. In the supervisory function both the diagnosis offered and feedback

received are significant for any meaningful change in performance or behavior to occur (Harris, 1985; Makawa, 1991).

Aspects in which PSHs require staff development and training

The results of analyzing PSHs' responses on areas in which they need INSET appear in Table 5. Their responses indicate that 85.7% needed training in syllabus interpretation in six subject areas, that is slightly over half the number of subjects in the primary curriculum. In the category of 'syllabus interpretation fall aspects such as drawing schemes, objectives, and lesson development in PE, Music, EAS, HE, SS, and RME. These results corroborate data presented in Table 4. A significant majority (80.9%) also required training in what has been aggregated as 'supervision strategies' particularly delegating supervisory duties to teachers and public relations skills required in the process.

Their need to be trained in supervisory strategies is a concern which should be taken seriously since being able to delegate some responsibilities of the PSH to other in-school staff would greatly decentralize school based staff development activity. The school head is usually overloaded with school management and administrative requirements which interfere with their involvement in knowledge utilization in curriculum and instructional matters (Nyagura and Reece, 1989; Hopkins and Wideen, 1984).

The data in Table 5 also show that a substantial percent of PSHs needed training in remedial teaching (38.1%), and financial record keeping and planning school expansion (47.6%). The nature of concerns expressed by the respondents reflect on their lack of training for their role as providers of leadership.

PSHs' perception on the staff development needs of assistant teachers

PSHs were asked to identify areas in which their assistant teachers would require INSET and to identify which of those areas they could provide school based SDT. The results of analyzing their responses

appear in Table 6. The last column in the table shows the percentage difference between aspects they could train their teachers and their perceived teacher needs. A negative sign has been used to depict that the PSHs were not wholly able to provide staff development in the aspects. A difference of 10% percentage points has been arbitrarily assigned to imply that the PSHs were unable to offer SDT to their teachers. The data in Table 6 complements that in Table 4 and Table 5. Areas in which teachers would benefit from INSET mainly concern teaching and lesson development in the Expressive Arts, EAS, RME, and HE (81.0%) and syllabus interpretation (76.2%).

Table 5: Aspects of teaching supervision in which PSHs need training (N = 21).

Aspects of Teaching Supervision	Frequency	
	n	%
Syllabus interpretation/drawing objectives/ lesson development/scheming (Music, PE, Art, RME, HE, EAS, and SS)**	18	85.7
Supervision strategies/ delegating duties to teachers/ public relations/ supervisory report writing	17	80.9
Financial record keeping/planning school expansion/ budgeting	10	47.6
Remedial teaching	8	38.1
Use of teaching and learning aids	2	9.7

Note: (1) **Subjects specifically mentioned with respect to this aspect.

(2) Aspect identified but has little to do with instructional supervision but with the PSHs' overall administrative role in schools.

When a comparison is made on their ability to provide training in the two areas the response rate becomes 57.1% for lesson development and 47.6% for syllabus interpretation and the percentage difference –23.9% and

–28.6% respectively. Basing on the negative sign of the percent difference (10% or greater), the PSHs are least able to provide their teachers with SDT in both curricula interpretation and instruction in PE (–28.5%), Music (–14.3%), EAS (– 19.1%), and HE (–19.0%). The areas in which they perceived teachers needed training are the same areas in which they were not themselves able to provide the training in their schools. In terms of curriculum and instructional areas, PSHs and teachers have concerns and lack of confidence which can hardly be overcome by anything short of formal training.

Table 6: A Comparison of PSHs' Perception of Teachers' Training Needs and In-school Training PSHs can Provide (N = 21).

Training Aspects	Training Needs		PSH Trains		Difference
	n	%	n	%	%
Teaching/lesson development in specific subject or teaching areas	17	81.0	12	57.1	-23.9
a. Physical Education	7	33.3	1	4.8	-28.5
b. Music	6	28.6	3	14.3	-14.3
c. Reading	7	33.3	5	23.9	-9.4
d. Environmental & Agric. Scie.	5	23.9	1	4.8	-19.1
e. Religious and Moral Education	7	33.3	2	9.5	-23.8
f. Art and Craft	5	23.9	4	19.0	-4.9
g. Home Economics	4	19.0	0	0.0	-19.0
Syllabus interpretation/ content structure and match to pupils' developmental and class level/ scheming and planning from syllabus	16	74.2	10	47.6	-28.6
Remedial teaching/record keeping/ diagnostic evaluation of lessons	8	38.1	4	19.0	-19.1
Class and discipline management/ pupils motivation	4	19.0	4	19.0	0.0
Use of a variety of activities (drama, poetry, field work)	4	19.0	2	9.5	-9.5

Note: (1) Training Needs = number of PSHs identifying area for teacher SDT

(2) PSH Trains = number of PSHs indicating they could provide SDT.

(3) Difference = percentage difference.

Staff development and training in schools and activities in staff meetings

This section analyses the self reports by PSHs on staff development and training activities previously conducted in their schools (Table 7), and the main purposes and activities in staff meetings (Table 8).

Table 7: PSHs' staff development and training activities in schools (N = 21).

Training Activity	Frequency	
	n	%
Syllabus interpretation/ text evaluation/ drawing schemes and planning lessons	16	76.2
Lesson development/ methods of teaching/ use of a variety of sources and activities/ lesson demonstrations	14	66.7
Public relations/ leadership/ conditions of service/ acts of misconduct/ communication	7	33.3
Class and discipline management/pupil motivation	5	23.8
Time-tabling/ sport organization	2	9.5

A significant majority of PSHs (51%) cited syllabus interpretation (76.2%) and delivery of instruction or lesson development (66.7%) as the commonest form of staff development activity conducted within their schools (Table 7). These two activities were the main activities and purposes of staff meetings as reported by 57.1% and 47.6% of school heads respectively (Table 8). Subject areas specifically mentioned by nine (9) respondents as those in which such activities had been conducted and the number of PSHs were as follows: Mathematics (5), English (particularly reading) (6), Art and Craft (3), PE (1), Music (2), HE and SS (1). Three subjects being mentioned in staff development activity, Mathematics, English, and SS, are not some of the subjects mentioned as

those teachers would benefit from INSET (Table 6). The first two subjects represent the traditional subjects in the conventional primary curriculum and hence teachers would be more confident in teaching or supervising others in these subjects.

Table 8: PSHs' reported use and purpose of staff meetings in schools N = 21).

Purpose of Staff Meeting	Frequency	
	n	%
Explaining or discussing school or ministry policy/ planning school activities and programs	21	100.0
Syllabus interpretation/scheming and planning/teaching methods/ sharing experiences on teaching/orienting teachers to developments in education	12	57.1
Identifying areas for in-service/reviewing demonstration lessons	10	47.6
Discussing or consulting in areas of concern (school-community relations, social interaction, school tone, and areas of general neglect)	10	47.6
Assigning duties to teachers such as classes to be taught and extra curricula activities	4	19.0

Efforts by PSHs to provide INSET for their teachers in subjects including the expressive arts in which they expressed lack of confidence is commendable. However, what is doubtful is the effectiveness of the training provided given their expressed lack of confidence and interest in receiving formal INSET in numerous of the subjects. In five cases, subject committees or panels were reported as the ones providing INSET, a commendable approach for sharing the limited expertise and experience within the schools. It would be desired to have all schools with subject committees the head of whom (initially) could be nominated for intensive INSET by the Curriculum Development Unit.

All PSHs (100.0%) reported using staff meetings for explaining official policy and public relations e.g. school community relations (47.6%). A substantial number used staff meetings for curriculum and instructional activities. From the data in Table 7 and Table 8, it may tentatively be concluded that staff development activity is mainly focused on curriculum and instruction–related issues while staff meetings are primarily used in managerial and administrative activities in primary schools. The findings corroborate those obtained by Nyagura and Reece (1989) who used a closed response instrument to survey secondary school heads. Of the five categories representing the main purpose of staff meetings in Table 8, three, discussing official policy, discussing areas of concern and negligence (mainly public relations), and assigning duties to teachers are administrative functions whose relationship to instruction or pupil achievement is indirect (Harris, 1985).

PSHs perception on the school's role in the training of primary teachers

Results of analyzing the responses on the perception of the school head in the role of the school in the training of teachers are presented in Table 9. The most frequently mentioned roles include supervision, assessment, and counseling trainee teachers (76.2%), and providing role models both in the school and in the community (52.4%). Least mentioned were roles pertaining to staff development training (47.6%) involving assisting trainees in becoming acquainted with conditions of service and policy so as to become independent teachers. It can tentatively be concluded that PSHs are aware of the role of the school in the training of teachers in conformity to the expectations of policy makers, teacher training colleges, and the university (Chivore, 1986). Data on the perception of primary teachers on supervision by PSHs and that on external assessment of student teachers on practice teaching raises questions on the effectiveness with which heads of schools perform these roles (Chivore, 1990; Shumba, 1991b). Supervision by school heads were rather isolated (Chivore, 1990) and a substantial number of student teachers completed their teaching practice experience with inadequately developed base–line teaching skills (Shumba, 1991b).

Table 9: PSHs' perception on the role of the school in training teachers (N = 21).

Perceived Role	Frequency n	%
Supervising/assessing/ counseling1	6	76.2
Providing role models/integrating trainee teacher into community/public relations	11	52.4
Staff development programs for trainees in areas such as conditions of service and policy interpretation/ assist trainee to be independent	10	47.6

PSHs perceptions on the problems and constraints in running schools

Table 10 summarizes the problems and constraints identified as hampering the running of the school and hence the effectiveness of the school operation. Ninety five percent (95%) of the PSHs identified "ineffective teachers" as the worst constraint in running schools.

Table 10: PSHs' Perception on the problems and constraints in their schools.

Problem or Constraint	Frequency n	%
Ineffective teachers/ high staff turnover/ reliance on temporary teachers/ uncooperating teachers/teacher absenteeism and drunkenness	20	95.2
Inadequate texts and stationary, furniture and equipment	15	71.4
Inadequate per capita grants/ funding	12	57.1
Lack of accommodation space for both staff and classes/ double sessioning	8	38.1
Pupil drop–out rate/ pupils discipline	6	28.6
Bureaucracy/ uncooperative responsible authority	4	19.0
School–community relations/getting parents involved in the school	3	14.3

Under the category of ineffective teachers has been included factors that contribute to ineffective schools viz.: resistance to change in curricula content and methodology, lack of knowledge in subject content, high staff turnover, reliance on temporary teachers, lack of cooperation, and teacher absenteeism and drunkenness. These are the most commonly mentioned problems in primary schools. The fact that nearly all (95.2%) of the PSHs identify these problems should raise serious doubts about the quality and commitment to the teaching profession of teachers in the schools. These problems may be exacerbated by the fact that the nation's teachers are becoming more youthful and less committed, and by the general teacher shortage which forced the nation to produce teachers en–masse with the concomitant deterioration in quality. Another factor could be the sense of hopelessness and frustration caused by having to teach novel curricula for which college did not adequately prepare them, especially that the level of vertical articulation between college and school curricula is (and has been) limited.

The problems are not helped by the reported inadequate supply of texts, furniture and equipment (71.4%), and inadequate funding or per capita grants (57.1%). These factors militate against effectiveness of schools and are contributory to the low morale of school staff who have to deal with extremely large classes. Basing on the Secretary for Education and Culture's report for 1989, budgetary constraints and teacher shortage will unfortunately continue to plague the nation's schools for years to come (Sibanda, 1991).

Summary of Findings and Implications

The sample of PSHs comprised heads of schools whose academic and professional qualifications were appropriate for appointment to the post of school head but who were considerably inexperienced as school heads. The PSHs had heavy teaching responsibilities in addition to their managerial, administrative and curriculum leadership functions. For effective instructional leadership, it would be desired to reduce some of the teaching, managerial and administrative responsibility of school heads (Nyagura and Reece, 1989). Although confident in assessing

schemes and plans, and lesson success PSHs felt least confident in supervising instruction and providing guidance in half the subjects comprising the primary curriculum particularly syllabus interpretation and lesson execution. This is a direct result of failure by curriculum planners in providing INSET to curriculum users and implementors leading to either non–use or inappropriate use (Hall and Hord, 1987). In their responses, school heads appear to have problems in drawing a distinction between supervisory assessment and the instructional supervisory roles.

Assessment involves attaching value to the quality of instruction and implies no assistance given to teacher by the supervisor. On the other hand curriculum and instructional supervision intends to promote the effectiveness of teaching through planned expert advice, suggestions, discussion and provision of alternatives on curriculum matters and on the actual teaching (Harris, 1985). Implicit in this view is the fact that these activities involve determining instructional objectives and instructional strategies, organizing for instruction, developing and monitoring instructional plans, and observing and appraising lessons which directly influence the quality of teaching and pupil learning and achievement. It is tasks such as these that Fullan (1984) identifies school heads as spending fifteen percent of their time on. Allowing for functions that fit more than one category, duties and functions of school heads in Zimbabwe are such that 80% are administrative, 45% curriculum oriented, and a mere 20% instructional related (Nyagura and Reece, 1989). The implication is that school heads spend more time attending to administrative tasks which only indirectly impact pupils achievement or class teaching. The administrative functions are those that support instruction but which are concerned with policy making, public relations and securing staff, resources, and instructional facilities (Harris, 1985).

The PSHs in the survey were not confident in providing feedback, guidance, and staff development to their teachers in curricula interpretation and implementation in the expressive arts, practical subjects, and subjects which were multi–discipline in nature (for example music, EAS, and SS respectively). Staff meetings were used mainly for

managerial and administrative activity while staff development activity was concerned in curriculum and instructional issues. PSHs were positive and anticipated INSET for them and their teachers in the curricula in which they lacked confidence particularly in syllabus interpretation and lesson delivery. Overall, although they seem to have interest in school improvement, there are severe constraints particularly when it comes to curriculum implementation and their school leadership function specifically hinging on their lack of training for these roles. It is essential therefore that the curriculum planners and policy makers should organize for intensive training of school heads and subject committee heads if meaningful implementation of the official curriculum is to be realized. Furthermore, there is great need to ensure that there is vertical articulation between the curricula offerings in the teacher training colleges and that offered in the schools. What is needed more of is planned change in which re–training of curriculum users and teacher educators should precede implementation in schools. If the PSHs self reports analyzed here reflect the situation in schools, then the official curriculum is likely to remain at the level of either non–use or in–appropriate use for many years to come. The concerns expressed by the PSHs serve as useful pointers as to the direction in which research and training in school improvement and teacher effectiveness should take.

Conclusion

Despite the limitations of an open response survey alluded to in this article, it is clear that if school heads are going to execute the administrative, curriculum, and instructional functions purposefully and effectively they will require formal training (Fullan, 1984; Makawa, 1991; Shumba, 1991a; Nyagura and Reece, 1989). Fullan's review indicates that school heads spend a mere fifteen percent of their time in curriculum planning, classroom supervision, staff development, and in–service education, and hence it can be inferred that they are unlikely to provide effective leadership in curriculum and instruction. Furthermore, heads of schools, even in developed countries, do not receive pre–service or in–service training for their role as curriculum change agents and hence they are unprepared to serve effectively in this role. Fullan's (1984)

description of what school heads do rarely mentions knowledge utilization behavior nor curriculum management but administrative functions which have only indirect influence on pupils achievement or teaching (Harris, 1985).

Any meaningful qualitative changes in the supervisory role, implementation of curricula, training of future teachers, and the education system as a whole will not be realized unless those tasked with day to day running of schools receive formal training in the developmental approach to curriculum and instructional supervision. If as we expect, school based staff development and training should take root in the nation's schools, the only way is to staff develop the leadership on whom so much responsibility and hope has been placed.

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